



STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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May 24, 2017

HAND-DELIVERED

✓ The Honorable Melissa Sargent
State Representative
Room 321 West, State Capitol

The Honorable Chris Taylor
State Representative
Room 306 West, State Capitol

Re: DOJ SAKI

Dear Representatives Sargent and Taylor:

Thank you for your letter of May 17, 2017. I apologize for the short delay in responding.

Contrary to the assertion in your letter, the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) is not "struggling" with the processing of the sexual assault kits (SAK). Wisconsin is actually leading the nation addressing this problem through our unique victim-centered approach, despite media portrayals to the contrary.

As you well know, the sexual assault kits at issue were sitting in police evidence rooms and hospitals across the state, with some going back nearly 20 years. The accumulated kits were never submitted to DOJ for testing and it is only through the program started by former Attorney General Van Hollen and continued by Attorney General Schimel that these kits are being tested at all. Notably, neither former Attorney General Doyle nor Attorney General Lautenschlager showed any interest in this issue or took any steps to prevent the accumulation of these kits in the first place. However, Attorney General Schimel is proud to have taken this issue up and is delighted by the support received from groups across the law enforcement spectrum and from the victim advocacy community, such as the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, and others.

Representatives Sargent and Taylor

May 24, 2017

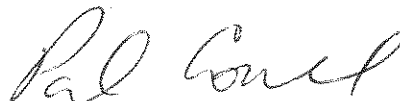
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Thus, it has fallen on Attorney General Schimel to solve this problem and to ensure that these kits never accumulate again. Accordingly, in the interest of complete transparency and so that you can operate with the facts going forward, I am making available our Violence Against Women Act prosecutor, AAG Audrey Skwierawski, to sit down with you at your convenience to walk you through how DOJ is handling this initiative and to explain why we have made the decisions we have on the testing protocol. She also can describe how DOJ is trying to reach survivors of sexual assault who have yet to authorize the testing of their kit, and will answer any questions that you may have. We have provided a similar briefing to other members of your caucus.

Typically, one of the questions that we receive is why we are not using the Wisconsin State Crime Lab (WSCL) to test the kits and instead using an outside lab for most of the initial analysis on a substantial number of these kits. The answer is simply one of capacity. The WSCL is equipped to process all of the evidence that it receives on a daily basis for current sexual assault cases, homicides, etc. and does not have the capacity to work on the untested sexual assault kits now being submitted by local law enforcement agencies and hospitals. Please know that the WSCL staff have been working overtime hours on this initiative. However, an outside laboratory was an absolute necessity to take the thousands of kits and get them processed. Indeed, almost all other jurisdictions are doing the same. In fact, to show you how seriously DOJ was taking this issue, prior to Attorney General Schimel announcement of the SAK initiative on February 2, 2017, the WSCL had already completed nine kits as of that date. That was the genesis of the news story that you attached to your letter. As of February 2, 2017, the outside laboratory had 200 kits and was processing them.

Thank you once again for your letter. AAG Skwierawski will be waiting for your phone call to arrange a briefing and to answer your specific questions.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul W. Connell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" being more prominent.

Paul W. Connell
Deputy Attorney General

PWC: